

Women Alive

Spring
2018

President

Opportunities are coming your way to learn, grow, serve and worship God with other women and girls across the state(s)!

A \$17 all you can eat Women's Breakfast Buffet is Saturday, May 5th, from 7:30 AM to 8:45 AM and will be held during TABCOM's Annual Gathering at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Leominster. Our guest speaker is Nancy Nienhuis, who is a Safe Havens (interfaith partnership against domestic violence) board member. She will be talking about domestic violence and why it is time for the body of Christ to intervene. Download a registration form from TABCOM's website, www.tabcom.org.

June 1st and 2nd we will gather with women and girls from Connecticut and Rhode Island for the AB Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS Tri-State Conference. The conference will be held at Camp Canonicus in Exeter, RI. Our theme is "Feel/Siente" based on the scripture, *"His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'we are his offspring.'"* (Acts 17:27-28). Our new AB Women's Ministries executive director, Rev. Gina Jacobs-Strain, is the keynote speaker. A flyer and registration form are attached.

Fall Women's Day is Saturday, October 6th and will take place at the First Baptist Church in Framingham starting with registration at 9:00 AM. Our featured speaker is Rev. Brenda Lammie, former AB Women's Ministries of MA Mission and Service Coordinator.

AB Women's Ministries ABCUSA has opportunities planned as well: live Bible study for young adult women, conference, gathering for girls, and a retreat on wellness. Check the "National News" section of this newsletter for details or visit their website, www.abwomensministries.org.

You may have already seen advertisements on these events, which I like to refer to as opportunities. Opportunities because AB Women's Ministries exists to serve and minister to girls and women of all ages through the teaching of the Word of God and providing fellowship, evangelism and discipleship, with the purpose of encouraging a deeper walk with Jesus Christ as we equip girls and women for ministry. It has been about twenty years ago when I was invited to attend an AB Women's Ministries of MA women's conference. Since then, my involvement with Women's Ministries has helped me to grow my faith as well as myself.

So, I would like to personally invite you to attend one or more of these opportunities and see what God will do in your life.



Bonnie Sestito
9 Teel St. PLACE
Arlington, MA 02474
781-641-1095
bfs35@hotmail.com

White Cross

To participating churches, I hope you have sent in the 2017-2018 White Cross requests and are now busy gathering information for your reports to your association's White Cross coordinator. Don't forget the deadline is April 30, 2018. To the association coordinators, reports to me are due by May 31, 2018. To those of you who may not know what White Cross is "welcome" and read further. I've gleaned some information from the National White Cross website.

2019 Will Mark 100 Years of Mission Support

White Cross had its beginnings during World War I, when many church women assisted the American Red Cross by providing surgical dressings, bandages, and other medical supplies. The "White Cross Service League" was organized after the war to support Baptist mission. White Cross was embraced by American Baptist congregations throughout the United States.

American Baptist women have given leadership in this ministry, which now provides some \$750,000 annually in Overland and Overseas mission support. Now entire congregations often work together to fill White Cross requests from mission workers when they don't have an organized women's group to do it. Through White Cross gifts, church members provide urgently needed supplies that cannot be purchased with limited mission budgets. The need for both funds and practical items given through White Cross is greater than ever. American Baptists are generous and caring people with a true heart for mission.

You read above the words "Overland" and "Overseas." White Cross supports both American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) or "Overland" and International Ministries (IM) or "Overseas." For 2017-2018 requests for both are below:

ABHMS (Overland)—ABHMS assigns the state the mission we are asked to support & supply. This year's mission is the Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries (MBMM). They requested goods and supplies as indicated by the list you should have received in your White Cross packet. If you didn't receive one, they will accept gift cards to Walmart as well as checks or Visa or Mastercard gift cards.

IM (Overseas)—IM has two parts: DOLLAR DONATIONS and HANDWORK DONATIONS.

DOLLAR DONATIONS allow you more freedom in your giving! What does that mean? You may choose the amount and the mission/project to support. Your gifts will help purchase: medical supplies for hospitals and clinics; educational materials for Christian centers and after school and adult programs; food, clothing and baby items for families OR you may give to a particular "Focus Area" that your Church is passionate about such as Education, Health or Support Against Human Trafficking. By giving to a "Focus Area" your gift of money will be divided equally amongst the missions that concern themselves with these specific "Focus Areas." The give online address has changed to <http://internationalministries.org/category/projects>. Click on "Find a Project" and scroll down the alphabetical list until "White Cross" then just pick the Country, Mission, or Focus and follow the onscreen directions to complete the transaction.

HANDWORK DONATIONS are for those of you who like to sew or make items with your hands or if you enjoy ripping sheets for therapy. Hospitals in the Congo need your artistry. What does that mean? If you received the 2017-2018 White Cross packet, the 2017-2018 handwork goal listed the total by specific item and size of the different handmade articles as the Congo hospitals request. Included is the how to make sheet for the different items on the list. You pick what to make and how many! Please consider giving ANY amount, these items are needed! Not handy? They accept checks, too.

Okay, so now you know and those of you out there whose churches are not participating (and there are quite a few), consider encouraging them to answer "YES" this fall when the 2018-2019 requests are distributed. If your church doesn't have an active women's group to administer the requests, then let your church mission committee know you are willing to help them with the requests. Remind them, this is not just "women's work" nor gender specific, that this is an American Baptist Churches USA mission concern.

Why wait? Get involved and start today.

At the AB Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS Tri-State Spring Conference, which is June 1st and 2nd and will be held at Camp Canonicus in Exeter, RI you will have a chance to learn more about White Cross by attending the White Cross Roller Bandages workshop. Never rolled a bandage? Come, see how and experience the therapy of ripping sheets. The conference registration form is attached, so sign up now.

If you have any questions about White Cross, especially if you never got a packet or need help with getting your church involved, please e-mail me at cibby@aol.com. Make sure to include your church name, address and contact information for you and your church.



Carol Polio
38 Hatch Rd.
Pembroke, MA 02359
512-585-5155
cibby@aol.com

Eight Steps of Giving

The Eight Steps of Giving are missions of AB Women's Ministries of MA. Women's groups, mission boards or individuals who give to the Eight Steps of Giving support

1. **Scholarship Fund** – Assists Massachusetts American Baptist women students to prepare for church related vocations.
2. **Camping Mission** – Helps provide camperships for youth at Grotonwood, Oceanwood and Camp Ashmere.
3. **State Project** – Contributions support a national, local or international mission project voted on at women's conference each year. This year's mission is a national project: Weirton Christian Center in Weirton, WV.
4. **State Support for AB Women's Ministries of MA** – Helps regional officers and office expenses.
5. **AB GIRLS** – Supports the needs of the Massachusetts AB GIRLS ministry, which is focused on building relationships, encouraging leadership, and developing skills.
6. **Friendship Fund** – Provides scholarships for women and girls to attend Massachusetts' AB Women's Ministries and AB GIRLS related gatherings.
7. **Women's and Girls' Mission Fund** – Supports the AB GIRLS ministry, Leadership Development Fund, Refit, and national mission projects. Your gifts will help AB Women's Ministries, USA to have funds readily available to support missions at home and around the world that focus on bringing healing, wholeness, and hope to women and girls.
8. **White Cross** – Overland and Overseas requests from American Baptist Home Mission Societies and International Ministries.

To ensure that your church's women's group or mission board or you are recognized as an "Honor Roll" church/individual at the end of our fiscal year send a check with the attached remittance form to the treasurer by April 30, 2018.

Mission and Service

I am sure I am one of so many who struggle with accessing social media vs. putting it aside. There is a huge gap between spending time with a piece of electronics vs. spending time with other people and/or nature.

Personally, I believe that social media can be an incredible tool in spreading the Word of God to millions of people throughout the world. On the other hand, as we have seen in so very many ways in recent times, it has become a way of deterring people from connecting to their faith.

I have come across an article that I would like to share with you. FYI, it has been edited. Maybe it will guide you in finding ways to share your faith and love of Jesus with others who you connect with via social media. It was written by Karen Ehman for FaithGateway, an online community for readers to discover great content and engage with their favorite Christian authors. It brings together content in many different forms such as daily blog posts, book excerpts, and devotionals. Their mission is to help you grow and share your faith.

What Would Jesus Say on Social Media?

If you play the fool and exalt yourself, or if you plan evil, clap your hand over your mouth! – Proverbs 30:32

“If you are tempted to slam someone online or brag on Facebook or send off a nasty tweet, turn off the screen and walk away!” Below are some ways to stay true to your beliefs:

1. Pray Before You Post

How many of us run to check your Facebook page first thing in the morning? Instead, consider reach for your Bible first. Perhaps if we spent time ingesting words of truth before we switched on the computer, we might not write things that are unkind or hurtful. At the very least, we can whisper a prayer before we post, asking the Holy Spirit to tap on our hearts if we are tempted to post anything online that would not glorify Him.

2. Imagine the Recipient Sitting Next to You

The Internet is so impersonal. We see words typed out on a screen rather than hear them spoken out loud. This makes it easy for us to be rude because it lacks the subtle social cues — the wince, the moment of quiet — that tell us we’ve crossed the line. We feel empowered and also have a sense of anonymity as we respond. But if the person was sitting next to us with eyes we could look into, perhaps we would state things differently. Before you post, ask yourself if you would say things differently if the recipient was actually sitting next to you.

3. Remember: When You’re Online, You’re Also on Stage

Unless we send a private message, our online words are available for others to see. Twitter followers see what we tweet. Facebook friends, and the friends of those on whose walls we post comments, also see what we say. And hundreds, if not hundreds of thousands, of people can see a comment we leave on someone’s blog. This should cause us to pause before we post — especially if there is a possibility we might later regret what we write.

4. Ask Yourself If You’ve Earned the Right to Address the Subject at Hand

If friends on Facebook are hashing through a hot-button issue of the day, (so many of them these days), do you have any expertise in the area, or are you only sharing an uninformed opinion? We can’t always be an expert on every topic at hand, so when we aren’t, we might do well to refrain from commenting at all.

5. Ask Yourself If You Have a Close Enough Relationship with the Person to Warrant Offering Your Opinion

It both irks me and makes me laugh when I see who hops on my page to offer their unsolicited opinions. Suddenly, people I haven’t heard from in years pop up on my screen offering their opinion about something I’ve posted. They give me specific instructions and pointed advice on what I should believe about a particular topic. This always surprises me because I don’t have a close relationship with these folks. Why do they think I will take their advice or value their perspective on my issues when they have not been a close friend or confidant?

Would they be responsive to unsolicited advice if someone they knew years ago suddenly walked up to them on the street and started telling them what to believe and how to act? If you’re tempted to dole out unsolicited advice to anyone who’s not a trusted friend, then I encourage you to resist the temptation!

6. When You Do Speak, Let Your Speech Be Laced with Grace!!

When we do speak, we can choose to be gracious rather than accusatory or negative. Our words must glorify God and not just exalt our own opinions.

We should be especially mindful that there are people whom we don't know who might be viewing our online speech. Here is a great guideline from Scripture:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. – Colossians 4:5-6

Let your social media communications be a way of sharing your faith, love and kindness into the world of others! It will make a difference!



Gina Grenier
10 Quaker Meetinghouse Rd.
Forestdale, MA 02644
508-259-1144
ginagrenier123@comcast.net

AB GIRLS National Leadership Team



Dear American Baptist Women and Girls,

My name is Anna Kouadio (I'm holding the #winning sign) and I'm the AB Women's Ministries AB GIRLS National Leadership Team's (NLT) Missions Coordinator. [Anna is holding the sign #winning.] First, let me start by saying that I've been through so much, but since I've been involved with the AB GIRLS ministry for the last 2-3 years, it's been one of the best things in my life. Nowadays, it's a little difficult to be a young American Baptist girl, but it has been much easier being with other girls and women to learn all the difficulties of girls all around the world and getting to know Jesus much better. I've met so many amazing young women, and I never thought I would be one to say this, but I have friends in so many different states. I'm very shy, at least I was before I started on the NLT. But all the activities we've done has helped me to shape into a wonderful young woman. Now I can with no second doubt raise my

hand in class to volunteer for something without having to wait at the end of class to ask the teacher. Now I have a job that requires me to engage with customers, and I'm never scared to talk to them. I have more friends than I thought a person could have. I mean some people have thousands of friends on Facebook, but they don't really know all of them. I never thought one could know so many people, not that I know a thousand. My point is that I became my best self, plus it's really fun. All of this became possible because I got the opportunity to go the AB Women's Ministries Conference in D.C. the summer of 2016. My church raised money and I received a scholarship from AB Women's Ministries of MA so that I could go, and it has been a life changing experience for me. There's no way I could ever repay all the great things they've done for me, but hopefully I could pass it to other wonderful young women.



National
Conference for
Women and Girls
July 19-22,
2018
Judson
University
Elgin, Illinois
Sponsored by
American Baptist Women's Ministries
and American Baptist Women in Ministry

I would like to invite all women to come to the 2018 National Conference for Women and all girls to the 2018 National Gathering for Girls that will be from Thursday, July 19th to Sunday, July 22nd. Gathering will be four wonderful days to meet amazing young ladies from other regions and states, to get to know yourself, to increase your wonderful relationship with the Lord and of course, to learn how to deal with "Transitions" in life which is the theme. It will be a lot of fun and great experience. All are welcome.

To learn more about Girls' Ministries visit

<http://www.abwministries.org/page.aspx/contentId/22/Girls-Ministries/>

For more information about the 2018 National Conference for Women visit

<http://www.abwministries.org/eventDetails.aspx?EventId=22>

For more information about the 2018 National Gathering for Girls visit

<http://www.abwministries.org/eventDetails.aspx?EventId=16>.

Anna Kouadio
Missions Coordinator
AB GIRLS NLT

[Anna Kouadio is from Calvary Baptist Church in Lowell, Massachusetts. She continues in her second year on the NLT as Missions Coordinator. Anna is active in her church choir and in TeensAlive, a ministry of Calvary Baptist Church. As a junior in high school, Anna is a member of many school clubs: Book, Spanish, French, and Math.]

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Central Association

We held our Annual Prayer Breakfast April 14th at The Baptist Church of Grafton and, as usual, it was great! It is such a treat to see these ladies, smiling, chatting and enjoying each other's company.

We were honored to have the Rev. Mary Day Miller, Executive Minister of TABCOM, for our keynote speaker this year. As expected, she was awesome. According to the evaluation sheet results, the ladies thought Mary and her message regarding "Five Women and a Baby" was terrific and inspiring and would love to have her again. I totally agree.

A delicious breakfast (we Baptist always enjoy good "eats"), singing a grace-in-the-round led by Pat Knowlton, Church Choir Director, making bids on the Silent Auction tables, browsing the Love Gift goodies and plants for sale, the White Cross table, all added to the event. We have a tradition of praying over baskets of prayer concerns and celebrations at the individual tables which is so moving to witness. Our special music segment this year, performed by the talented Pat Knowlton, was moving and beautiful. Pat has the voice of an Angel. Praise the Lord!

Our Annual Prayer Breakfast has always been a high-point for me personally but especially this year. Seeing these ladies enjoying themselves has always empowered me but this year especially touched my heart. After the Benediction, the Board presented me with a gift and a plaque, thanking me for serving as their President and Secretary. What a surprise; it really touched my heart so much. I knew if I opened the gift and/or read the plaque, it would bring me to tears so I waited until I got home.

Well, I was correct. The plaque was from AB Women's Ministries, thanking me for my 16 years of service. The gift...the gift was a lovely wooden music box. But, that's not all. Inside the box were two items: a gold coin...on one side this inscription: "When you saw one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you." On the reverse, footprints. Oh, but wait there's more! There was also a beautiful little angel figurine with praying hands and "blessings" inscribed on her skirt. Be still my heart! Thank you, ladies! You have no idea how much this means to me.

For 2019, Gardner has volunteered to host our Annual Prayer Breakfast. I'm already looking forward to it and chatting with all these lovely Christian ladies, all who have served God and passed on His love. You are all

invited; I pray y'all can join us! You'll be so glad you did. Thank you to CMABW ladies for the privilege to serve you and for the love I receive in return.

*Patricia J. Downe, Retiring President & Secretary
Central MA Association of ABWomen*

Merrimack Valley Association

Happy Spring to all the American Baptist women of Merrimack Valley! We rejoice in Resurrection Sunday!

We hope your knitting needles are busy creating all the beautiful hats, scarves, and mittens for our annual Christmas party, which will be a Christmas Brunch on Saturday, December 1, 2018 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The place is to be determined, but we hope you can join us to once again welcome the coming of Jesus Christ. Please note this is a CHANGE IN DATE AND TIME!

If you have not mailed your \$10.00 assessment to our Treasurer, Ruth Shaw, please do so. Each church is asked to pay this to help provide for speakers and other expenses for our gathering. Ruth's address is: 3 Middle Road, Merrimac, MA 01860.

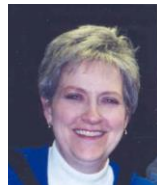
Enjoy this wonderful time of renewal and keep on collecting small soaps, shampoos, and toiletries, keep on knitting, and keep on thanking God for all His blessings.



ABWofMV Planning Committee

*Carolyn Webster
25 Bulkeley Rd, Littleton, MA 01460-2007
978-486-4393 (H)*

*Linda Southall
2 Luan Circle, Chelmsford, MA 01824-3517
978-256-5738 (H)
hughso@verizon.net*



NATIONAL NEWS

Welcome, Reverend Gina Jacobs-Strain



The national board of managers of American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) announced on Tuesday, January 23, 2018, that the Reverend Gina C. Jacobs-Strain has accepted its invitation and call to the position of Executive Director and will lead the national organization following the retirement of Virginia R. Holmstrom on March 1.

An ordained American Baptist minister, Jacobs-Strain brings a variety of professional expertise to the organization, including an 18-year career in banking before her call to professional ministry; higher education teaching and administration; local church pastoral leadership; and regional ministry experience. Jacobs-Strain served First Baptist Church – New Market (Piscataway, NJ) as its transitional pastor; is department chair of

Division of Student Success at Nyack College (Nyack, NY); and supports women in ministry in American Baptist Churches of New Jersey as associate regional pastor for Women in Ministry. Prior to 2003, she was employed as senior credit deputy at JP Morgan Chase (Manhattan, NY), and for two years as assistant vice president of State Street Bank (Boston, MA).

Jacobs-Strain describes her call and transition into church-related leadership: "I am filled with awe and expectation as I join a sisterhood of women committed to build the body of Christ by intentionally following the

movement of God, being fully engaged in the denomination's missional focus and by embracing the gifts and participation of all women and girls throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

Jacobs-Strain received a B.A. in Psychology / Education from Rutgers University with certification to teach K-12 grades. She graduated from Drew University's Theological School (Madison, NJ) with a Master of Divinity Magna Cum Laude, and is currently completing a Doctorate of Ministry with a focus on leadership, from Duke Divinity School (Durham, NC). In 2016, she received a Certificate of Excellence from Palmer Theological Seminary and ABC-NJ Academy and in 2017 graduated from the Nehemiah Leadership Program.

Note: Meet Rev. Jacobs-Strain at the AB Women's Ministries Tri-State Conference June 1-2 at Camp Canonicus in Exeter, RI where she will serve as Bible study leader.

Live Bible Study for Young Adult Women

After a long day at work, school, and/or home, you may not want to travel to church for a Bible study. AB Women's Ministries' young adult women's ministries advisory team is hosting a live Bible study on Facebook for young adult women--you can attend this Bible study from the comfort of your sacred space! Plan now to join the Bible study on May 21 at www.facebook.com/ABWMYAW. (You do not need a Facebook account to watch the Bible study. Like our young adult women's ministries Facebook page to receive a notification when the Bible study begins.)

Upcoming live Bible studies hosted by the Young Adult Women's Ministries Advisory Team are

May 21: Acts 17:22-28 hosted by Jessica Jenkins
June 18: 1 Samuel 2:1-11 (The Voice) hosted by Joy Andrews
July 16: Isaiah 11:9 hosted by Jami Robertson

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/ABWMyaw.

2018 National Conference for Women



FEEL: Fully Exploring and Engaging in God's Love
Isaiah 11:1-9

2018 National Conference for Women

July 19-22, 2018

(begins with dinner on Thursday and ends with morning worship on Sunday)

Judson University
Elgin, Illinois

Explore the love that God has shown for you through Christ Jesus
Engage in God's love in the world

Conference Highlights:

- Small group time to grow relationships and support with your sisters in Christ
- Inspiring Bible study and worship
- Learning opportunities to increase your understanding and equip you for ministry in Christ's name
- Special opportunities for young adult women

2018 National Gathering for Girls



Transitions: Fully Exploring and Engaging in God's Love
Isaiah 11:1-9

2018 National Gathering for Girls

July 19-22, 2018

(begins with dinner on Thursday and ends with morning worship on Sunday)

Judson University
Elgin, Illinois

Harvesting SHALOM

Harvesting Shalom: A Retreat about Wellness

For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." (Acts 17:28, NRSV)

Friday, September 28 – Sunday, September 30, 2018

(Begins after dinner Friday and ends before noon on Sunday)

Canonicus Camp and Conference Center
Exeter, Rhode Island

For details or to register visit the AB Women's Ministries at www.abwomensministries.org or if you don't have online access contact Marilyn Glover, AB Women's Ministries of MA Secretary at 781-322-5361 and she will assist you.

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